Post 11/12/68

Around the World

Britain, After Spy Trial, Asks Soviets to Cut Staff

LONDON—Soviet Ambassador Mikhail N. Smirnovsky was called to the Foreign Office yesterday and told that the Russian diplomatic staff in London, implicated in a recent spy trial, should be reduced in size.

Sir Paul Gore-Booth, permanent under secretary at the Foreign Office, took the action a week after court testimony said the first secretary in the cultural department of the Soviet Embassy had used his diplomatic status as a cover for espionage activities.

There was no indication how big Britain expected the Soviet cutback to be. It was believed the government imposed no time limit.

The number of Soviet diplomats and service attaches here has grown from 67 a year ago to 79 this month. The corresponding figure at the British Embassy in Moscow is 40.

The Mediterranean

MOSCOW—The government newspaper Izvestia said that if the Mediterranean has become a world hot spot it is mainly because of the presence there of the U.S. 6th Fleet.

The 6th Fleet used to have the Mediterranean practically to itself, but the Soviet Union has recently increased its naval strength there to about 50 vessels.

"The Soviet Union is, as is known, a Black Sea power, and in that sense a Mediterranean power," an article by L. Kolosov said. The goal of peace, it maintained, "can be attained only by the way of an active struggle against American imperialism and for the liquidation of its political and military system in the Mediterranean Sea."